

Waitful Watching

D
526
.2
FG



JAMES L. FORD



Class D52.2

Book .F6

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

WAITFUL WATCHING



“Suddenly poor Sammy realized that he had been led into
a hornet’s nest”

—Page 4

Waitful Watching

or

*Uncle Sam and the Fight
in Dame Europa's School*

By

James L. Ford

Author of "The Literary Shop," "The Great
Mirage," "Bohemia Invaded," etc.



Illustrated by Reginald Birch

New York
Frederick A. Stokes Company
Publishers

11526

2
18

Copyright, 1916, by
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

Copyright, 1916, by
THE VANITY FAIR PUBLISHING CO., INC.

All rights reserved

4060

AUG 28 1916

©CL.A 437386

710.1

ILLUSTRATIONS

“Suddenly poor Sammy realized that he had
been led into a hornets’ nest” *Frontispiece* ✓

FACING
PAGE

“But, to his rage and amazement, little Al-
bert valiantly opposed the bully’s pas-
sage” 22 ✓

“ ‘When are you coming over to help us?’ ” 44 ✓

“Uncle Sam hurled his trusted dictionary
into the troubled waters of the pond” 54 ✓

WAITFUL WATCHING

WAITFUL WATCHING

UNCLE SAM, as he is affectionately termed by the smaller lads who look to him for protection, is the biggest boy in Madame Columbia's Mercantile Academy and almost as large as the largest boy in Dame Europa's School. On a certain hot day in the early summer of the present year of grace, 1916, he was led by a train of circumstances, which it is my purpose to narrate in due course, to enter the garden of a boy named Pedro, in order to chastise him for his hostile acts. Pedro's garden is large and uncultivated, abounding in jagged rocks and semi-tropical vegetation. Its climate is hot and it is infested

with poisonous reptiles and insects. In short, it is a place to be avoided during the heated term, and it was only the jeers of his schoolmates and the prickings of his own laggard conscience that induced Uncle Sam to undertake this disagreeable expedition.

Very cautiously he advanced, picking his way through the rocky defiles and stepping gingerly, for he had a wholesome fear of snakes. He could see Pedro retreating before him, and from time to time the sound of hoarse gutturals told him that his wily enemy was not alone. Suddenly poor Sammy heard the buzzing of angry insects, and realized that he had been led into a hornet's nest. Relying on his great size, which was altogether out of proportion to his intelligence, he had neglected to

Waitful Watching

prepare for the fight and the enraged hornets stung him through his thin clothing, while Pedro assailed him with a shower of missiles. The hoarse guttural voice was now raised in ironic laughter, and in the crafty dark face that leered at him through the shrubbery, Sammy recognized one of Dame Asia's pupils who had long cherished a bitter grudge against him.

How came Uncle Sam into this unfortunate predicament? This is the story, now told in full for the first time.

From the wide playground that stretched down to the shore of the pond that separated the school from the Select Finishing Academy of Dame Europa on the eastern shore, Sammy had long gazed with feelings of admiration

and envy at the pupils of the more aristocratic institution, affecting to despise them for their effeminacy, yet keenly envious of their personal distinction and *savoir faire*, of whose lack he was painfully, even morbidly, conscious. To the west of the playground was another pond and beyond this was Dame Asia's Oriental Academy of Learning, where the arts of dissimulation were taught in an incomparable manner. His nearest neighbor was a turbulent lad named Pedro, who had long been a thorn in his flesh and for whose conduct, as well as for that of the smaller boys in his own school, Uncle Sam held himself responsible.

Pedro, who had always defied and outwitted the truant officers, had more than once excited the wrath of Dame

Waitful Watching

Europa, and only escaped pummeling by the intervention of Sammy, who would shake the Big Stick given him years before by a boy named Monroe, and declare that no one should cross the pond with punitive intent.

Because of his great size, which was altogether out of proportion to his years, Sammy had firmly believed himself to be the strongest boy in the whole schoolboy world. Self-willed, undisciplined, generous and kind hearted, and having the run of a playground so large and well-wooded that he could easily hide from his teachers, he spent more time in studying and imitating Dame Europa's lads, especially his elder brother, Johnny Bull, than he did over his books. The same teachers were employed in both schools, but

Sammy paid but scant heed to their ministrations. He laughed at Miss Experience—the wisest of them all and the strictest disciplinarian as well—and turned a deaf ear to the words of Professor Efficiency and old Doctor Thoroughness, utterly disregarding the fact that every one of those excellent pedagogues was held in high esteem by the wise Dame Europa, whose system of education he admitted was superior to his own.

Sam had many of the faults common to immature youth, one of which was a naïve vanity that constantly sought new forms of expression. He never failed to exhibit his delight when any of the other boys flattered him, which they did in the grossest manner when—

ever they wanted anything. And when even this insincere praise was not forthcoming, he patted himself on the back, an art in which practise had long since rendered him ambidextrous. He was very fond of poking his nose into the affairs of others—"reforming" them, he called it—and not infrequently assembled himself into a commission or committee for the purpose of reforming himself.

There was one instructor, however, to whose precepts he listened only too readily, and that was General Bigbusiness, a charlatan whose breezy self-assurance and loud talk had made such a deep impression on Madame Columbia, who was far less sophisticated than Dame Europa, that she engaged him

exclusively for her school and advertised the fact widely in the hope of securing more pupils.

With much shrewdness the General won the heart of his employer by telling her that the course of instruction in her Mercantile Academy was vastly superior to that of Dame Europa, who paid much attention to the classic and modern languages as well as to music, literature and general cultivation. For such things, he declared, "the world has no use nowadays," and he assured her that the boys who succeeded in life were those who devoted their entire attention to such practical matters as the making of various articles and selling them to the other boys.

Barter and exchange of all kinds were encouraged in both schools as part

of the preparation for the serious commercial transactions of later life, and the boys had a currency of their own in which their operations were carried on. By following the General's advice and devoting himself to trade, instead of to the development of his mind, Sammy managed to acquire a great deal of this currency and to keep himself supplied with candy, cake and expensive toys. Miss Experience, who knew the history of schools, teachers and schoolboys for many, many years, tried to warn him of the inevitable result of filling his pockets merely that he might play games and overload his stomach with unwholesome sweets, but General Bigbusiness ridiculed her as a sour old maid whose advice was not worth considering.

“See how much better off you are since I came to the school!” said the old charlatan. “You’ve got more toys and better ones and more candy and cake and pie than any boy living. Before long you’ll have every dollar of currency there is in the land, and then any boy who needs spending money will have to borrow it of you. It’s in anticipation of that time that I’ve started my class in High Finance.”

The truth of these words was so apparent to Sammy that he did not attempt to deny them. That he was the richest lad in the whole schoolboy world he firmly believed, but that the treasures he was laying up were already appealing to the cupidity of certain dishonest lads never occurred to him.

So Sam continued to study with dili-

gence under his favorite teacher and the latter rewarded him with a prize in the shape of an unabridged dictionary, calling his attention to the great number and variety of the words that it contained and assuring him that they could be used as a means of settling disputes, thus saving much time and currency besides enabling him to avoid the personal encounters in which the other boys frequently indulged, to the ruin of their clothes and the alarming disfigurement of their features.

Now, in Dame Europa's School, as well as in that of Madame Columbia, each pupil has a little garden in which to carry on some industry like manufacturing or the growing of fruits and vegetables. Dame Europa's gardens are much smaller than those of her rival

beyond the pond, and the question of their boundaries has caused many disputes and such bitter animosities that the wiser and stronger boys have more than once been obliged to interfere and settle matters with the strong hand of authority. And, as these stronger lads could not always agree among themselves, two rival groups were formed, ostensibly for the protection of the smaller lads and the preservation of the established boundaries, but in reality with a furtive eye to the acquisition of more land. Each of these two groups kept a watchful and anxious eye on certain hot-headed, pugnacious little lads who were always ready to fight at the drop of a hat. One of these turbulent spirits was little Peter, and it was on the boundary line between his garden

and that of the haughty Franz Josef that the great fight, into which nearly all of the other pupils were subsequently drawn, had its inception.

Because of a deadly affront, for which Peter disclaimed all responsibility, his arrogant neighbor demanded such abject apology and exorbitant reparation that the little fellow declared he would fight first. He had already been assured of the aid of his big cousin, Nicholas, whose garden, the largest in all the school, was contiguous to that of Franz Josef.

Nicholas was self-willed, rough in manner, strong in arm and brave in battle, and now when he planted himself on the edge of his garden and warned Franz Josef to be careful how he attacked his small neighbor, all the

boys realized that the great fight, for which, to tell the truth, so many of them had been spoiling, had broken out at last. Nor were they surprised when Junker Hans, a strong, sturdy lad, who had been cunningly egging Franz Josef on, told Nicholas that he must keep his hands off his next door neighbor and let Peter take the pummeling he so richly deserved. But Nicholas scorned to take orders from any one; moreover every member of the group to which he belonged was bound to come to the help of one who was attacked.

Now while Dame Europa's pupils were, for the most part, scions of aristocratic families, Junker Hans was of the humblest peasant birth. Fully aware of his faults and limitations, he had con-

stantly sought to improve himself, and had not only been a diligent student, but had also kept himself in the best physical condition, for, in his secret heart, he aspired to be not only the cock of his own school but also that of every other like institution in the land. His teachers, especially Miss Experience and Professor Efficiency, spoke in the highest terms of his industry and willingness to submit to wholesome discipline, and predicted for him a brilliant future. Under their instruction this young peasant lad had acquired the thinking habit and had invented many articles which he sold to the other boys to defray the cost of his own education. In this work, he compelled certain smaller boys who were his allies, but whom he treated rather as his slaves, to

give him their services, and thus it came to pass that his trade became too large for his little domain and he was casting an envious eye on the gardens of his neighbors.

In fact, his gaze had wandered long ago across the pond and lingered covetously on the rich lands of Pedro and Uncle Sam and the huge treasure house of currency acquired by the latter in the course of trade. All unknown to either lad, Hans had laid his plans for appropriating everything to himself. Unscrupulous in his methods and well versed in the arts of dissimulation, he had cultivated friendly relations with the simple-minded Sammy, by a course of flattery and cajolery that concealed his real purpose, while at the same time he had cunningly incited

Pedro to wanton acts of hostility against his neighbor, in order that the latter's attention might be turned in that direction.

In years past Hans had not scrupled to administer a sound beating to Frances Gallia, the prettiest and most coquettish pupil in the good Dame's co-educational establishment, and Frances still cherished hopes of revenge. It was this fight¹—so short, sharp and decisive that it was finished before the other boys fairly realized that it had begun—that made Junker Hans cock of the walk, and it was in that capacity that he now stepped bravely up to Nicholas and threatened him with his mailed fist. Then, as it seemed to his

¹ An account of this fight was written by the late Richard Grant White under the title, "The Fight in Dame Europa's School."

suspicious mind that Frances Gallia was making faces at him over her garden wall, he determined to attack her before she should have a chance to pitch into him, so he summoned his smaller vassals, whom he had long since drilled into a firm belief in his own omnipotence and in the virtue of implicit obedience to his will, and with these under his command attacked Frances and Nicholas simultaneously.

Between the large garden of Junker Hans and the far more beautiful domain of Frances lay the small plot occupied by a little chap named Albert, and cultivated by him with a skill that commanded the envy and admiration of the whole school. Indeed, so steadily had Albert devoted himself to the

care of his few acres and to their tasteful adornment that he had never been regarded as a fighter, and so Hans now gruffly commanded him to step aside that he might walk across his land and punish Frances for her malicious distortions of visage. That was the trivial reason that he gave for his unwarranted attack on a fellow pupil who had done him no harm, his real reason being his wish to acquire some of Frances Gallia's garden, which she had adorned by the exercise of an artistic taste that was all her own and in which she had no rival among Dame Europa's pupils. Hans was specially covetous of a small strip that bordered on the big pond, believing that its possession would make him a more formidable power than ever

in the great schoolboy world and perhaps facilitate his plan to cross the wide water and rob Pedro and Sammy.

It was with this acquisitive purpose in mind that he shouted to young Albert, and roughly bade him stand aside, not doubting that he would obey. But, to his rage and amazement, the little boy quickly armed himself with such weapons as were nearest at hand and valiantly opposed the bully's passage, at the same time calling to the other lads for aid. Johnny Bull heard his cry and warned the angry peasant lad to desist, reminding him that they had both long since signed a paper guaranteeing Albert from intrusion.

But Hans had never learned to speak or even to respect the truth, as had the better bred boys in the school, and he



“But, to his rage and amazement, little Albert valiantly
opposed the bully’s passage” —Page 22

was indignant with Johnny for considering a mere scrap of paper an obstacle to anybody's ambition. So he fell upon his small neighbor with his brass knuckled fists and forthwith there ensued a fight that will never be forgotten by the pupils of Dame Europa's School. Never in the history of that institution had a boy of Albert's diminutive size been so cruelly beaten by a bully; never had the School witnessed a more gallant resistance against overwhelming odds. The contest was so fierce and the shouting of the combatants so loud that boys for miles around gathered to watch the fray. Albert fought until he could fight no longer and his aggressor, after stamping on the boy's prostrate body and kicking him until the other lads cried "Shame!" passed on through his

garden and entered that of the beautiful Frances. But the brave little Albert had not suffered in vain, for, while he was staying the march of the invader, his neighbor had had time to prepare her defenses and Johnny Bull to sound the tocsin summoning his younger allies to his side.

Now Johnny Bull's garden was an island, separated by a wide creek from that of Frances, and adjacent to it were the gardens of Scotty and Pat, two of his most trusty allies. Johnny had been in his day the acknowledged cock of the School and as such had frequently enriched himself at the expense of his fellows, who, largely speaking, had no love for him, and openly ridiculed his pretensions and his bullying manner. At the breaking out of the

fight, there was but one boy in the School who believed Johnny to be all that he had boasted, and that was Johnny himself. In schoolboy slang, the rest had been "on to him" for some time, and none knew him as thoroughly as did Junker Hans, who had studied him closely for several terms.

In Johnny Bull, as in all boys, both good and evil traits were blended. Among his worst faults were his Phari-saical pretense of a virtue superior to that of his fellows, and a conceit which took the form of a supreme confidence in his own robust powers and his inability to go wrong. Because of this conceit, Dame Europa's excellent corps of teachers had found it difficult to impart any instruction to his sluggish brain. Miss Experience had long regarded

him as hopeless, though she had on several occasions stood him up in a corner with a dunce cap on his head as a warning to the others. He had worn this cap years before after two squabbles with his own younger brother across the pond; again when he had burnt his fingers while pulling a bit of Turkish paste off the fire for Frances to eat; again when Hans had cunningly persuaded him to keep his hands off while he thrashed the same Frances, and again when he had gone forth—against the dictates of his better self—to beat a small but courageous boy in Dame Ethiopia's far distant school. His prestige as a fighter rested largely on his victory over an audacious boy named Boney who, many years before, had appropriated to himself the gar-

dens of many of the other pupils and become so strong that Dame Europa commanded the others to make common cause against him. In this fight, which was not ended until Boney had been driven from the School, Johnny had shown himself a boy of courage and prowess, which is all the more to his credit when we remember that he stood in such deathly awe of Boney that he could hardly sleep at night. It was Johnny who administered the *coup de grace*, after which he had returned in triumph to his own garden and reared several monuments to himself. As time went on he forgot the aid that he had received from Alec, the previous occupant of Nicholas' garden, and from Hans, then a small lad, who had arrived on the field of action in the nick of time

and delivered two or three body blows to the common foe.

All this he forgot, and actually believed that he had thrashed Boney single-handed, after the manner described on the many monuments erected by his own hand to his own glory. Constantly reminded of his own prowess by these monuments, Johnny had long since relaxed in physical training, though he still traded jack knives with his fellow pupils without giving evidence of failing mental powers. He grew slothful and gluttonous, and, by indulging his appetite for candy, pastry and other unwholesome sweets, acquired a huge paunch, while his arms and legs grew proportionately weak. Of all this Junker Hans was well aware, for, thanks to Dr. Thor-

Waitful Watching

oughness, he had learned the value of rightly estimating not only his own strength but that of a possible enemy as well.

But Johnny had many good traits, among which were courage in the final extremity, a love of justice, and a sufficient respect for the truth to regard his own signature as a sacred thing. He could not accept Junker Hans' plea that a solemn covenant was a mere scrap of paper to be torn up and thrown away at the signatory's convenience, and it was this belief, blended with a fear that Hans would despatch Albert and Frances and then cross the ditch and attack him that caused Johnny to come to the little fellow's aid. At the same time he shouted across the pond to Uncle Sam: "Aren't you com-

Waitful Watching

ing into this fight? You ought at least to make a kick against the way Junker Hans is pitching into little Albert!"

Sammy seized his dictionary, hastily scanned its pages and then shouted in reply: "I'm too proud to fight."

Just then Pedro assailed him with a shower of sharp pebbles, in dodging which and in listening to the advice of General Bigbizness, Sam's attention was quickly diverted. The General urged him to devote himself to the making and selling of sticks, arrows, sling shots and other articles necessary to the carrying on of the big fight, remarking in his shrewd way that the misfortune of one boy was the opportunity of another.

So Uncle Sam shook his fist at his unruly neighbor and shouted: "You'd

better look out! I'm going to watch and wait if you don't behave yourself!"

Having uttered these words of solemn portent, he turned to the making of slings, bows and arrows, in which trade Hans had in times past shown great energy and skill and had never scrupled to supply, to his own profit, both sides of a dispute. Well versed in the convenient art of forgetfulness he now shook his fist angrily at Samuel and warned him not to furnish his, Hans', enemies with weapons. At the same time one or two of Sam's small fellow pupils reminded their protector that it might be well to keep some of the hand-slings, sticks and stones for use against Pedro, and to construct some flying machines for their own use. To this voice of prudence as well as to

the protesting Hans, Sam merely said: "We must watch and wait," and went on with his making and selling, serene in the approval of General Bigbizness.

Thereupon Hans seized his new blow gun, an invention of his own, and rained half a dozen pebbles on the cheeks of the boy across the pond, causing him to utter a cry of angry pain, while the other lads stood gazing in astonishment and wondering what would happen. Nor did their wonder cease when Sammy extracted from his dictionary the words "strict accountability" and hurled them angrily at his tormentor.

Now Hans, like Uncle Sam, had long been a persistent noser into the affairs of the other boys, but unlike the big overgrown lad, he had not nosed

with the foolish idea of doing good, but for selfish purposes of his own. As the truth was not in him, he had developed a genius for this sinister work and in his school desk were stored away complete and accurate lists of the various weapons of defense kept by the different boys in reserve for emergencies. He had also taken pains to acquaint himself with the physical, moral and mental qualities of each of his young companions and the manner in which they kept themselves in training; and thus he had learned of Johnny Bull's condition, due to his gluttony and idleness. And all this time he had been preparing for the big fight by secretly making and storing up sticks, stones, bows, arrows and slings, together with bandages and healing liniments. His flying ma-

chines were the best in all the land and he had secretly perfected a boat that could travel a great distance under the water. Both of these contrivances he used for the purpose of injuring and terrorizing his opponents.

Johnny Bull had no sooner put up his fists than he found that his arms were enfeebled and his knees shaken through a long course of devotion to his own over-fed stomach, and that a constant and exuberant contemplation of his own virtues, as recorded on his various monuments, had rendered his brain so sluggish that it required several blows from Hans' well aimed missiles to bring him to a realizing sense of the vast difference between what he really was and what he had imagined himself.

Reeling back from the encounter and

holding a handkerchief to his bloody nose, he called loudly to his smaller allies, bidding them come to the aid of him whom he had taught them to regard as their natural protector. These responded quickly and bravely, for in Dame Europa's School the first duty of the protected is to protect the protector. And, in an incredibly short space of time, hard-fisted, bare-legged Scotty and pugnacious, red-headed Pat had ranged themselves beside him, while from far across the pond his smaller brothers embarked in their canoes to join the fray.

Meanwhile, the smaller pupils retired behind barricades made of a malleable clay called "strict neutrality," where both sides found it advisable to allow them to remain. Those in the

immediate neighborhood of Peter were soon heard snarling among themselves and eventually nearly all of them were drawn into the quarrel, as was Italia, a blood relation of Frances Gallia, and, like her, a girl of great beauty and spirit.

As for Sam, he applied a little Pond's Extract to his bruised face and drew from his dictionary a fine assortment of sonorous words, few of which contained less than three syllables. These he hurled across the pond at Hans, exclaiming triumphantly: "That will teach you not to shoot pebbles at me!" Then turning a scowling face toward Pedro, he added: "This goes for you, too!"

The looks of wonder on the faces of the combatants broadened into con-

Waitful Watching

temptuous smiles. "What else are you going to do?" roared Johnny Bull. "Watch and wait?" "No," rejoined the other, "I have decided to wait and watch, for to fight I am too proud! Besides I must finish these orders for my customers."

But Sammy did much more than this. Easily moved by the misfortunes of others, he wept when he saw the grievous wounds that the fighters inflicted on one another, and, with a generosity and unselfishness characteristic of his simple nature, he sought to alleviate their sufferings. He paddled across the pond with great bottles of healing salves and rolls of bandages, and with his own hands bound up the wounds, thereby gaining but little gratitude and even less respect.

In the old days of peace, Sam, who prided himself rather unduly on his keen sense of humor, had been wont to amuse himself by drawing pictures on his slate representing Hans as a tow-headed clown with wooden shoes and a foolish cast of countenance, trying to build a flying machine or—still more ridiculous—a boat to go under the water. He had laughed heartily at his own exquisite wit, and the other boys had shared his mirth, for nothing appeals to the humorous perception of a schoolboy as does the humiliation of another. It was Hans' turn now and his strident laughter echoed across the pond as he upset Sam's canoes and peppered him with his popgun. And all the louder did he laugh when the other replied with volleys from his dictionary.

Waitful Watching

But Sam did not laugh, for the popgun hurt and the words did not. Even Hans' enemies paused in their fighting and swelled the chorus of laughter at the comical spectacle of the once boastful Sammy, the bully of his own school, protecting his face with his hands and roaring out that if the other did not stop, he would watch and wait until he did.

"You must stop making those slings and arrows!" yelled Junker Hans from across the water. "You ought to be fair to both sides, but instead of that you're selling things to Johnny Bull."

"Well, I *am* fair to both sides," replied Sammy; "I'm ready to make things for you, too, if you'll only give me the order."

"But I can't get them if you do make

them!" cried the other. "My canoes are all up Salt River Creek, and Johnny Bull won't let them come out! If it wasn't for you, this fight would have been over long ago."

To which the other made answer in one of his rare bursts of intelligence: "Yes, and then you'd be ready to come over here and lick *me*."

What Hans said about his canoes was perfectly true. Like all island-dwellers Johnny Bull had been addicted to water sports since early childhood. He could swim and dive like a duck and paddle a canoe or manage a sailboat better than any other lad in all the schoolboy world. For years he had spent a large share of his liberal allowance of pocket money on craft of all kinds, and therefore the beginning

of the fight found him with a fine fleet of boats, well equipped for racing and for fighting as well. No sooner had the fight begun than he despatched these boats and canoes, manned by his smaller allies, to the mouth of Salt River Creek, in which estuary he effectually bottled up the fleet of Junker Hans.

Now there was no boy in all the land who had watched the progress of the fight with as keen an interest or a deeper comprehension of what it really signified than little Fugi Yama, the brightest pupil in Dame Asia's Oriental Academy of Learning. Fugi was not popular with the other boys for the excellent reason that he was cleverer and better mannered than the rest, more cleanly and abstemious in his habits and more tasteful in his dress.

Because of these traits—unforgivable in the schoolboy world—he was usually termed a barbarian. Fugi had long cherished a righteous grudge against Junker Hans, and now, seeing him engaged with his enemies, he seized certain small gardens illegally held by Hans and made them his own. He cherished an equally righteous and still more bitter grudge against Uncle Sam, of which the latter was uneasily conscious, but now too busy to pay much heed to matters of such remote contingency, for he had undertaken to supply Johnny Bull and his friends with such a quantity of blow guns, slings, clubs and missiles that he was obliged to put all the smaller boys to work and to construct several new wooden sheds in which to carry on their labor. Feeling

himself immune from outside attack, he had, like Johnny Bull, neglected his physical and moral welfare and in consequence thereof, the malignant germ of cowardice had flourished in his system and was fast undermining his character. He tried to deceive himself and his playmates as to the real nature of these germs by culling from his dictionary the misleading word Pacifism and applying it to them like a healing plaster, and, having thus blinded his own eyes to this ulcer on his moral nature, he thought that he had hidden it from the others as well.

But Hans, who had already recognized this Pacifism for what it really was, slyly let loose in Madame Columbia's School a deadly microbe called Burnstuff, which had the quality pe-

culiar to itself of producing sleeping sickness whenever it came in contact with the germs of Pacifism.

Long before this the crafty Hans had inoculated the simple Sammy with an even more malignant germ called the Hyphen, and this, when joined to the Burnstuff microbe, brought on a sharp explosion, followed by devastating flames. Now these germs and the microbe produced a succession of conflagrations in Uncle Sam's wooden sheds and also in various skiffs and canoes, laden with weapons, which were destroyed as they lay along the shore. While Uncle Sam was searching in his dictionary for a word that would conceal the nature of the Hyphen germs he was startled by a loud wail of anguish from Johnny Bull, who had been



“ ‘When are you coming over to help us?’ ”—Page 45

ejected by Hans from the territory of one of the latter's allies and severely kicked in the process.

"When are you coming over to help us?" bawled Johnny, standing on the shore of his island and holding both hands on the seat of his injuries.

Now Uncle Sam had just burned his own hands and singed his hair and eyebrows while putting out the fires caused by the Burnstuff microbe, and he was in no mood to utter a conciliatory reply, and too keenly on the watch for other explosions to select a suitable phrase from his dictionary.

"Haven't you got help enough?" he roared. "You've got Pat and Scotty and all the other boys and girls who are on your side! And if I do go into the quarrel—which is not my quarrel after

Waitful Watching

all—I shan't be able to finish that great lot of slings and blow-guns I'm making for you. I'll have to keep them for my own use!"

"But I'm your elder brother!" wailed Johnny. "Haven't I always let you play my games and copy my clothes? Haven't you always copied my manners instead of becoming absurdly polished like Frances Gallia? Do you want to see your own brother beaten to a pulp? I tell you to come over here and help me!"

"I am helping you the best I know how," retorted Sammy. "If it wasn't for me, you and your crowd wouldn't have anything to fight with. And just look at all the bandages and liniments I've given you for nothing just because I didn't want to see you bleed to death!

That's more than you ever did for me when I had that trouble with some of my smaller boys a few terms ago. Did you come over and help me then? Not a bit of it. On the contrary, you did everything you could to make the trouble worse. Now you can take care of yourself! I've got all I can do, putting out fires!"

But Sam had much to occupy his mind beside merely putting out fires, for some of Madame Columbia's smaller pupils who looked to him for protection, had awakened to the growing need of weapons and missiles with which to resist any possible attack from an enemy and their clamoring now became so persistent that their protector was again driven to his dictionary. A moment later he was shouting "Prepared-

ness!" with so much vehemence that it looked as if he were actually going to do something. But, even while he was yelling his loudest, he continued to fill orders for his customers to the neglect of his own need, while Miss Experience wept at sight of his folly.

All in vain did this excellent creature point to Johnny Bull, now struggling valiantly to atone for the neglect of her precepts, and to the superb spectacle presented by Frances Gallia, who, having had the sense to profit by them, was defending herself from the ruthless attack of Junker Hans with a courage that compelled the admiration of the entire schoolboy world. Frances did not, like Johnny Bull, call upon Sam for aid, though she was justly entitled to it because of assistance that she had

Waitful Watching

rendered to him when he was a very small boy. Professor Efficiency and Doctor Thoroughness added their warnings to that of Miss Experience by calling attention to the manner in which Hans had prepared himself for the fight while the rest of Dame Europa's pupils were amusing themselves on the playground and Sam was filling his pockets with the school currency.

Then suddenly the Burnstuff microbe, acting in concert with the Hyphen germ, entered into Pedro's system and caused such an outburst of rage, accompanied by fierce volleys of stones directed against Uncle Sam, that he was reluctantly compelled to put up his fists in self-defense and even to cross the boundary into the other's garden in order to administer condign punishment.

Here he soon found himself in a hornet's nest, with adders hissing about his feet, the sound of guttural laughter ringing in his ears, and Fugi Yama grinning at him from the shrubbery, precisely as it is set down in one of the early pages of this veracious history.

It was at this moment that he realized that his dictionary, practically the only weapon that he had at hand, was ridiculously inadequate as a means of punishing such a pugnacious boy as little Pedro, and the suspicion that his implicit confidence in General Bigbizness had led him to the very brink of serious disaster, entered his mind and caused him many hours of uneasiness.

One by one the difficulties of his position loomed up before him, completely driving from his brain the sense of se-

curity on which he had relied. He saw now that not only was Fugi Yama watching him with furtive, malevolent eye, but that Johnny Bull as well as Hans and Franz Josef entertained inimical feelings toward him. If Dame Europa's boys could make flying machines powerful enough to cross from one garden to another, how soon would they build one strong enough to cross the big pond? Miss Experience, to whom he was now willing to turn one reluctant ear, recited pages of school history showing that in times past even the most embittered enemies had been known to patch up their quarrels in order to make common cause against some weaker boy, and now Uncle Sam suspected that he himself was the weakest boy in the whole school world, in-

stead of the strongest as he had once believed. Meanwhile the Hyphen germ was spreading through his garden and the Burnstuff microbe was doing its deadly work of arson. In payment for what he was supplying to his customers, he had accepted notes signed by them and endorsed by General Bigbizness, who was always ready to promise anything. He had accounted these notes as cash at a trifle less than their face value, but now it occurred to him that the signers might find themselves unwilling or unable to pay and that the breezy General might prove but a weak financial reed to lean upon.

Carrying his dictionary under his arm, Sammy picked his way back to the shore of the pond and stood gazing at the great fight that was raging

with unabated fierceness. For the first time since it began, a sense of his own complete isolation and loneliness took possession of his soul. Johnny Bull, who by this time had gotten his second wind, was using his fists as well as the weapons that Sammy had sold him on long credit with a courage and determination worthy of the very best there was in him. Somehow, his former invitation to Sammy to join the fray did not seem as absurd and selfish now as then. Frances Gallia and her cousin Italia were fighting splendidly, too, and on the other side of the field Nicholas was hammering away at both Franz Josef and Junker Hans with telling effect. If his young companions had sent him to Coventry and refused to allow him to take part in their games

poor Sammy could not have felt more completely out of everything than he did now.

He realized, too, with increasing wretchedness of spirit and self-contempt that in refusing to come to Johnny's aid he had missed the greatest opportunity that had offered itself since he first entered the school—the double opportunity to do what he had known all along was right and to make powerful friends at the same time. After all, Johnny was his own elder brother and the claims of blood kinship should have been strong enough to wipe out all unpleasant memories. By frequent insults and the upsetting of his canoes, to say nothing of letting loose the deadly Burnstuff microbe in his garden, Junker Hans had given him good



“Uncle Sam hurled his trusted dictionary into the troubled
waters of the pond” —Page 55

and sufficient reason for entering the fray on his own account and now he felt that if he had done his share, Johnny, Frances, Fugi Yama and the rest would have recognized him as a member of their powerful group and entitled to their aid in any trouble that the future might hold for him. Now he realized with feelings of bitterness that he was an object of hatred and contempt. At this moment one of Madame Columbia's smaller pupils, whose soul had been corroded by the Pacifism germs, peered furtively into the dictionary and extracted the phrase: "Well, he's kept us out of a fight, anyway."

In a sudden outburst of rage and despair, illumined by gleams of returning intelligence, Uncle Sam hurled his

Waitful Watching

trusted dictionary into the troubled waters of the pond, convinced that now indeed was he naked to his enemies.

THE END



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 009 563 967 7

